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Special Committee on the Situation with regard to the Implementation of the Declaration on the Granting of Independence to Colonial Countries and Peoples

Dissemination of information on decolonization during the period from April 2016 to March 2017

Report of the Secretary-General

Summary

The present report, prepared in response to General Assembly resolution 71/121, provides a general overview of the activities undertaken and supported by the Department of Public Information to disseminate information on decolonization, with particular emphasis on the options for self-determination available for the peoples of the Non-Self-Governing Territories. Unless otherwise mentioned, it covers the period from April 2016 to March 2017.

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I. Introduction

1. The General Assembly, in paragraph 2 of its resolution 71/121, considered it important to continue and expand its efforts to ensure the widest possible dissemination of information on decolonization, with particular emphasis on the options for self-determination available for the peoples of the Non-Self-Governing Territories. To that end, it requested the Department of Public Information, through the United Nations information centres in the relevant regions, to actively engage and seek new and innovative ways to disseminate material to the Non-Self-Governing Territories. In paragraph 3 of the same resolution, the Assembly requested the Secretary-General to further enhance the information provided on the United Nations decolonization website and to continue to include the full series of reports of the regional seminars on decolonization, the statements and the scholarly papers presented at those seminars and links to the full series of reports on the Special Committee on the Situation with regard to the Implementation of the Declaration on the Granting of Independence to Colonial Countries and Peoples (Special Committee on Decolonization). In paragraph 4, the General Assembly requested the Department of Public Information to continue its efforts to update web-based information on the assistance programmes available to the Non-Self-Governing Territories. In paragraph 5 it requested the Department of Political Affairs and the Department of Public Information to implement the recommendations of the Special Committee and to continue their efforts to take measures through all media available, including publications, radio, television and the Internet, to give publicity to the work of the United Nations in the field of decolonization.

2. In fulfilling its mandate, the Department of Public Information worked closely with the Decolonization Unit of the Department of Political Affairs, among other relevant United Nations offices and entities.

3. The present report, prepared in response to that mandate, covers the period from April 2016 to March 2017.

II. 2016 regional seminar on the implementation of the Third International Decade for the Eradication of Colonialism

4. The Special Committee on Decolonization organized its annual regional seminar in Managua, from 31 May to 2 June 2016. The seminar was held with a view to accelerating action in the implementation of the Third International Decade for the Eradication of Colonialism (2011 2020).

5. The Department of Public Information deployed a press officer from the Meetings Coverage Section in New York to cover the seminar. The press officer worked closely with the Decolonization Unit, providing media support and issuing daily press releases, which were disseminated through the Department's various communications platforms.

III. Coverage of issues before the General Assembly

6. During the reporting period, the Department issued 32 press releases in English and French, covering meetings, statements and hearings relating to the United Nations work on decolonization, including by the General Assembly and its Special Political and Decolonization Committee (Fourth Committee), and the

Special Committee on Decolonization. A press statement on behalf of the Special Committee marking the fifty-sixth anniversary of the Declaration on the Granting of Independence to Colonial Countries and Peoples was also issued in English and French in December 2016.

7. The Media Accreditation and Liaison Unit disseminated information about meetings on decolonization through media alerts, and provided accreditation and liaison support to media representatives covering the meetings. The Media Documents Centre also distributed statements and other information related to those meetings.

United Nations website and social media

8. The Department continued to maintain and update the website on the United Nations and Decolonization (www.un.org/en/decolonization) in the six official languages, adding pages for the new sessions of the Special Committee on Decolonization, as well as documents and press releases, including a special page dedicated to the photo exhibit on the occasion of the fifty-sixth anniversary of the Declaration on the Granting of Independence to Colonial Countries and Peoples. During the period from January through December 2016, the website registered nearly 804,000 page views, a significant increase (133 per cent) over the previous year. The table below shows the United Nations decolonization website traffic in 2016, by language:

Language	*Sessions*	*Users*	*Page views*	*Pages per session*
Arabic	5 317	5 086	16 182	3.04
Chinese	3 114	2 224	16 609	5.33
English	93 343	74 176	486 626	5.21
French	12 124	10 936	38 987	3.22
Russian	3 480	3 480	23 860	6.86
Spanish	60 481	47 041	221 532	3.66
Total	**177 859**	**142 943**	**803 796**	**4.55**

9. Activities and issues related to decolonization were also highlighted through special web pages maintained by the Department, such as the "Global Issues" web page (www.un.org/en/sections/issues-depth/decolonization/). During the reporting period, the Department redesigned, updated and enriched the decolonization page with infographics and other elements.

10. The Department's various social media accounts promoted issues related to decolonization, including the fifty-sixth anniversary of the Declaration on the Granting of Independence to Colonial Countries and Peoples, and helped in driving traffic to the decolonization website and other relevant web pages and events.

United Nations News Centre

11. The United Nations News Centre, operating in the six official languages, Kiswahili and Portuguese, and disseminating information through websites, social media and multimedia platforms, provided coverage of the activities, the events and the issues related to decolonization and Non-Self-Governing Territories.

12. To name a few examples, the United Nations News Centre interviewed the Chair of the Special Committee on Decolonization, the Permanent Representative of the Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela to the United Nations, Ambassador Rafael Ramirez, on the Organization's historic achievements in the area of decolonization and the current work of the Committee. It also provided extensive coverage of the visit of the Secretary-General to Western Sahara in March 2016.

13. The news platforms of the Arabic Unit also promoted the subject matter. Many of its news stories, videos and photos were picked up by other websites and news agencies in the region, as well as by social media.

14. Coverage of the Spanish Unit featured issues of particular relevance to the Latin American and Caribbean regions, including Puerto Rico and the Falkland Islands (Malvinas).

15. The United Nations Television News and Facilities Unit covered formal open meetings of the Special Committee on Decolonization and related press conferences, the relevant sessions of the Fourth Committee and the General Assembly plenary. In 2016, the United Nations webcast website (http://webtv.un.org) provided coverage and published 51 videos on the issue of decolonization. The coverage was available for the public live and on demand.

16. The United Nations Photo Unit covered six meetings and events on the work of the United Nations in the field of decolonization, including an exhibit at United Nations Headquarters commemorating the fifty-sixth anniversary of the Declaration on the Granting of Independence to Colonial Countries and Peoples in December 2016.

17. The multilingual United Nations News Centre highlighted issues pertaining to decolonization as part of its regular coverage of United Nations events, issues and themes. Across the News Centre platforms, including news pages in Portuguese and Kiswahili, there were 37 news stories and features that discussed the subject. The articles were further disseminated through social media platforms of both the United Nations News Centre and the main United Nations social media accounts. They were also distributed through the News Centre's e-mail-based news alerts service and RSS feeds and re-disseminated by online news aggregators.

IV. Visitors Services

18. The issue of decolonization was regularly included in the narrative of the guided tours of United Nations Headquarters in New York. In the Trusteeship Council Chamber, tour guides explained the historical process of decolonization, including the role played by the Trusteeship Council and the work of the Special Committee on Decolonization in the light of the 1960 Declaration on the Granting of Independence to Colonial Countries and Peoples. During the reporting period, 238,371 visitors took a guided tour at United Nations Headquarters in New York.

19. The Visitors Services at Geneva, Nairobi and Vienna also conducted briefings on decolonization, including on the roles of the Trusteeship Council and the Special Committee on Decolonization, as part of their guided tour programmes. The information provided covered issues related to the remaining Non-Self-Governing Territories. In Geneva, at the Palais des Nations, 112,000 visitors were briefed on decolonization issues, while in Nairobi, 6,360 visitors learned more about the role of the Trusteeship Council and the Special Committee. The 57,300 visitors to the United Nations Office at Vienna were educated on the role of the Organization in decolonization processes and received relevant information materials.

V. Dag Hammarskjöld Library

20. The Dag Hammarskjöld Library continued to provide research and information services on decolonization and related issues on an ongoing basis. During the reporting period, the Library provided the Department of Political Affairs with historical information (composition, membership and structure) of the Decolonization Committee. In addition, the Library handled a series of requests for research and information services on the topic, including some 20 specific requests sent through the online Ask Dag platform (http://ask.un.org) and created or maintained six online frequently asked questions on United Nations documents related to decolonization. The topic was covered in the Library's online research guides (http://research.un.org), where the keyword "decolonization" is mentioned 89 times; "colonies" 47 times; and "non-self-governing territories" 99 times.

21. Through its retrospective digitization programme, the Library continued to upload important United Nations documents on decolonization to the Official Document System (ODS) of the Organization. The objective is to make an increasing number of documents accessible through the Internet while ensuring the preservation of the original versions. During the reporting period, 29,520 documents (equivalent to 341,388 pages) were scanned, of which 14,021 documents (170,117 pages) were uploaded to ODS, including 336 documents (2,685 pages) of the Fourth Committee summary records and other documents on decolonization issued between the early 1950s and the 1990s.

22. In the past year, the Library indexed some 7,700 United Nations documents and publications, including those connected to the work of the Fourth Committee, the Special Committee on the Situation with regard to the Implementation of the Declaration on the Granting of Independence to Colonial Countries and Peoples and other United Nations bodies on the topic of decolonization. The analytical treatment and indexes allow for thematic and geographic subject access and easy discovery of the documents through the Library's online services. Six volumes of the *Index to Proceedings of the Security Council* (seventieth year), the United Nations Economic and Social Council (2015 session) and the General Assembly (sixty-ninth session and the twenty-eighth, twenty-ninth and thirtieth special sessions) were completed and posted on the United Nations website. In addition, the Library continues to update the index to the database that facilitates the discovery of speeches before the General Assembly, the Fourth Committee and the Economic and Social Council on the topic of decolonization.

VI. United Nations publications

23. During the reporting period, the Department published volume 66 (2012) of the *Yearbook of the United Nations* and continued to work on subsequent volumes. With its comprehensive coverage of the annual activities of the United Nations, including those related to decolonization, the *Yearbook* presented the work of the General Assembly, the Fourth Committee and the Special Committee on Decolonization, as well as general decolonization issues and the support provided by the Economic and Social Council to Non-Self-Governing Territories. The United Nations Yearbook Twitter account also featured historical items related to decolonization.

24. During the reporting period and pursuant to paragraph 1 of General Assembly resolution 70/103, the Department published the updated version of the leaflet What the UN Can Do to Assist Non-Self-Governing Territories, which includes a brief description of various United Nations entities activities in support of the Non-Self-

Governing Territories (www.un.org/en/decolonization/pdf/What%20the%20UN%20can%20do.pdf). The updated publication is available on the website at www.un.org/en/decolonization/, in the six official languages. Hard copies were issued in English, to be followed by French and Spanish versions in 2017.

VII. United Nations information centres and services

25. The global network of United Nations information centres located in more than 60 countries worldwide conducted regular briefings on the history, the structure and the activities of the Organization, which also highlighted its work on decolonization, including the ongoing Third International Decade for the Eradication of Colonialism, the United Nations trusteeship system, and the role played by the United Nations Trusteeship Council.

VIII. Conclusions

26. The Department of Public Information, in close collaboration and cooperation with the Decolonization Unit of the Department of Political Affairs, continues to disseminate information about decolonization and promote the topic through its various platforms. It highlights the need for immediate and full implementation of the 1960 Declaration on the Granting of Independence to Colonial Countries and Peoples. The work of the Special Committee on Decolonization, which is the intergovernmental body devoted to advancing the United Nations decolonization agenda, remains at the centre of the Department's outreach activities with media, civil society and educational institutions.